# PRINT, PERFORMANCE, MANUSCRIPTS... AND PRINT

*Changing Strategies of Jesuit Mssionary Propaganda in 16th - 18th c. Kerala*

## CHRISTOPHE VIELLE

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Kerala Council for Historical Research

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**CHRISTOPHE VIELLE**

Christophe Vielle is a renowned Indologist, with particular interest in the premodern and early modern literatures of Kerala. He has worked extensively on Arnos Padiri (Johann Ernst Hanxleden SJ), including on manuscripts of the latter's Malayalam - Portuguese dictionary as well as his Sanskrit grammar. Vielle is currently F.R.S. - FNRS Professor Extraordinaire at the University of Louvainin Belgium.

# PRINT, PERFORMANCE, MANUSCRIPTS... AND PRINT

## Changing strategies of Jesuit missionary propaganda in 16th -18th c. Kerala


### ABSTRACT

The paper explores the relation between the printed word and performative art-forms on one hand and the motivations of early European missionary activity in Kerala. It looks closely at the evolving readership as well as the conditions of production and circulation of missionary literature, and its impact on the languages of the region.

# PRINT, PERFORMANCE, MANUSCRIPTS... AND PRINT

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## Introduction

In the $16^{th}$-$17^{th}$ centuries, after the Portuguese had settled in several coastal towns of Kerala (Kochi, Kollam, etc.), the conversion of the lowest castes and 'Catholicisation' of the local St. Thomas Christians were undertaken under the leadership of the Jesuits. With the Dutch conquest of the Portuguese possessions in Malabar (beginning in 1663), the Jesuits, linked to the Portuguese crown by the *Padroado* system, were forced to leave Kochi. They then settled their main college and residence in Ambalakkad (today Sampaloor), in the interior near Mala, to continue their mission. In the areas controlled by the Dutch (who themselves left in 1795), the Jesuits were replaced by the Discalced Carmelites, an order more directly dependent on the Pope and the Roman Congregation 'for the Propagation of the Faith' (*de Propaganda Fide*). In the $18^{th}$ century, the influence of the Jesuits was considerably reduced after they were expelled from the *Padroado* (1759) and the Society was suppressed universally by the Pope. (This last happened in 1773; the

society was restored in 1814). Jesuit missionaries only returned to Kerala at the end of the 19th century (1879 in Kozhikode, 1892 in Kochi; see Jose 2018), but by then, under the British rule, indigenous Kerala society had changed radically.

We will make here a quick survey of three centuries of Jesuit presence in Kerala. At the end of the 16th century, they began by patronising an over-ambitious programme of printed propaganda, clearly unsuited to the socio-cultural context. Then, in the 17th century, they changed their strategy, and began patronising a native popular theatrical art based on Christian themes. At the same time, they composed works of Catholic propaganda in the vernacular for a literate local audience, and which were distributed in traditional manuscript form. The use of printing was briefly revived in 1675, but only for use in priestly circles. In the first part of the 18th century, an original poetic Catholic literature in Malayalam was created by a German Jesuit, who became famous under his local name of Arnos Padiri. At the end of the same century, Catholic propaganda again resorted to printing in the vernacular, this time carried out directly in Rome by the Discalced Carmelites and then brought to Malabar for the use of the clergy. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Malayalam-speaking people started developing a book culture, and printing houses were set up in many places in Kerala. Arnos Padiri's works were printed several times in the new and various Christian and Catholic printing houses, and this is well before the return of the Jesuits to the country.

## The first Jesuit-patronised vernacular printings in 16$^{th}$ c. Malabar

The very first catechism in Tamil was printed in Lisbon by Germain Gaillard (Germão Galhardo) in 1554, with the Tamil language (intermingled with Latin and Portuguese) written in Roman script (*Cartilha... em lingoa Tamul e Portugues*; see Filliozat 1967). The first printing press in India was brought from Portugal to Goa, at the Jesuit College of St. Paul, on 6 September 1556. The first printed books in Goa (and in India) were produced using this press in 1557. One of the books was a version of the brief catechism in Portuguese composed in 1542 by Francis Xavier for teaching purposes. (He had also prepared in 1542-46 a brief as well an extended catechism in Tamil with the help of a local priest.) The second book was a *Confessionairo* (Confessionary). Both are now lost. The first preserved Goa imprint is dated 1561. It was followed, in 1563, by the printing of the famous *Colóquios dos simples e drogas he cousas medicinais da Índia* ("Conversations on the simples, drugs and medicinal substances of India") by the Jewish physician and herbalist Garcia da Orta (1501?-68).

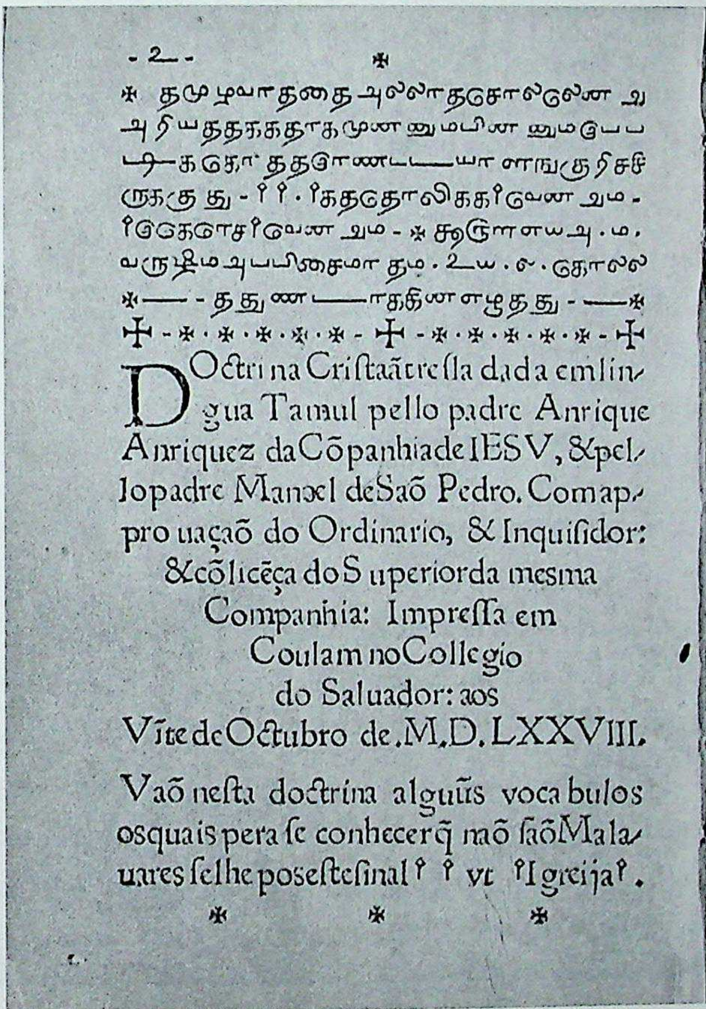
The printing activity extended to works in Indian languages after the Jesuit Provincial Congregation of Goa declared in 1575 (under the impetus of the Visitor from Rome, Alessandro Valignano, who later was Provincial of Goa in 1583-87) that various instructional works should be prepared for the native Christians in their vernacular languages,

including a Catechism, a Confessionary, a Doctrina Christiana and a Saints' Lives. Henrique Henriques (1520-1600, who came to Goa in 1546 and was on the Fishery Coast in 1547) was ordered to prepare such works for the Tamil area. This ambitious Jesuit-patronised printed propaganda programme was achieved under the direction of Henriques within the next 20 years.

With the help of Pe(d)ro Luis, a Brahmin convert from Kollam who was the first native Indian Jesuit, and a follower of Henriques since 1547, metal types in Tamil (the first movable types in an Indian language) were produced in Goa by the Spanish Jesuit Juan Gonsalvez (†1578). These types were used to print, on the press of the College St. Paul of Goa in 1577, for the first time a short Tamil catechism: Henriques's (and Manoel de São Pedro's) revised version of Francis Xavier's original brief catechism (mentioned above). Produced with the financial help of the (recently converted) Parava Christians of the Fishery Coast, it was intended to serve in this specific area (cf. Henriques' letter from Tuticorin in the same year, quoted in Schurhammer 1952). No exemplar of this text has survived. (According to Joseph Scaliger's testimony, one was in the University of Leiden in the 17$^{th}$ c. See Shaw 1981a).

A new version of this short catechism, printed with improved Tamil types prepared by João de Faria (†1582), was made (on another press) at the Jesuit College of the Saviour in Kollam in 1578. This text was entitled *Doctrina Christam* or (in Tamil) *Taṃpirāṉ vaṇakkam* ('Salutation of the Lord').

The only surviving exemplar of this 16 pp. imprint is kept in the Houghton Library of Harvard University since 1951 (described in Schurhammer 1952. This document is now available to read online, see bibliography s.v.; a reprint with a Malayalam translation was published; see John 2005).


- 2 -

DOctrina Criſtaã treſladada em lin-
gua Tamul pello padre Anrique
Anriquez da Cõpanhia de IESV, & pel-
lo padre Manoel de Saõ Pedro. Com ap-
prouaçaõ do Ordinario, & Inquiſidor:
& cõ liceça do Superior da meſma
Companhia: Impreſſa em
Coulam no Collegio
do Saluador: aos
Vĩte de Octubro de .M.D.LXXVIII.

Vaõ neſta doctrina alguũs vocabulos
os quais pera ſe conhecerẽ naõ ſaõ Mala-
uares ſe lhe poſeſte ſinal ° ° vt °Igreija°.

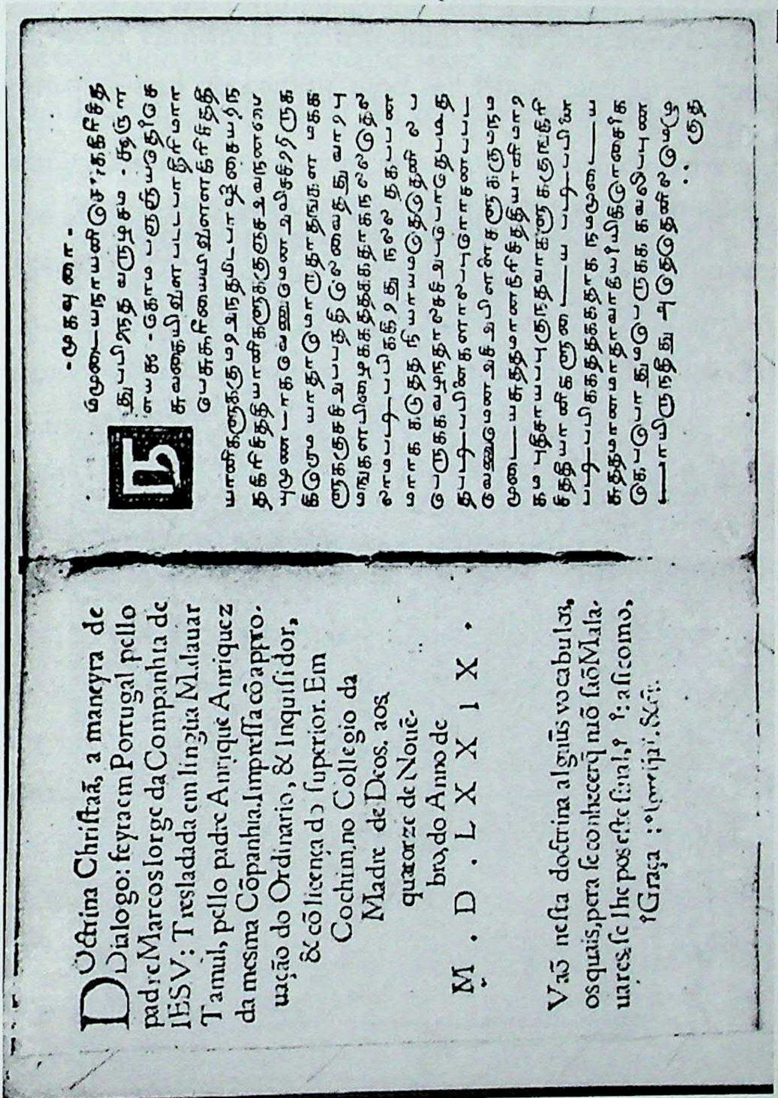
Fig 1. *Doctrina Christam*, Kollam, 1578, p. 2

Why Kollam? Possibly because it was also intended to serve in the (Parava) Tamil areas of the Malabar coast (cf. *Goa An. Let.* 1600: "for the other coast, he [Henriques] made a catechism in Malabar [language]", where 'Malabar' must mean Tamil, not Malayalam, cf. below), and the Jesuit Rector at the College of Kollam was at that time still the regional Superior for the missions on the Fishery and Coromandel coasts.

In 1579, Pe(d)ro Luis was working at the major Jesuit College of the Mother of God (Madre de Deos) in Kochi. There he printed, with de Faria's Kollam types, a longer Tamil *Doctrina Christam* or *Kiricittiyāni vaṇakkam* (Christian Salutation") and a Tamil *Confessionairo*, in 1579 and 1580 respectively.

The *Doctrina*, having 120 pp. ([viii] + 112), was Henriques's translation of Marcos Jorge's *Doctrina Christã ordenada a maneira de dialogo* (Lisbon, 1566). One exemplar of this text is preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Two other exemplars were available in the Jesuit seminary of Enghien (in Belgium) and in the University of Paris Library until about the middle of the 20th century, but have now disappeared. Fortunately, Georg Schurhammer's photographs of the latter has surfaced in Jaffna Bishop's House, Sri Lanka (see EAP981 with an additional note of mine).

Fig. 2. *Doctrina Christam*, Kochi, 1579, pp. [iv-v]
(Paris exemplar)


DOctrina Christaã, a maneyra de
Dialogo: feyta em Portugal pello
padre Marcos Iorge da Companhia de
IESV: Tresladada em lingua Malauar
Tamul, pello padre Anrique Anriquez
da mesma Cõpanhia. Impressa cõ appro-
uação do Ordinario, & Inquisidor,
& cõ licença do superior. Em
Cochim, no Collegio da
Madre de Deos. aos
quatorze de Nouẽ-
bro, do Anno de
M. D. L X X I X.

Vaõ nesta doctrina alguũs vocabulos,
os quais, pera se conhecerẽ nuõ saõ Mala-
uares, se lhe pos este sinal, ? ; asi como,
? Graça ;

The only surviving exemplar of the *Confessionairo* was rediscovered by Graham Shaw in the Bodleian Library in 1982. This 107 pp. "libretto for dialogue between a Jesuit confessor and a Parava penitent", composed by Henriques following some Portuguese model has been studied by Ines Županov (2012).

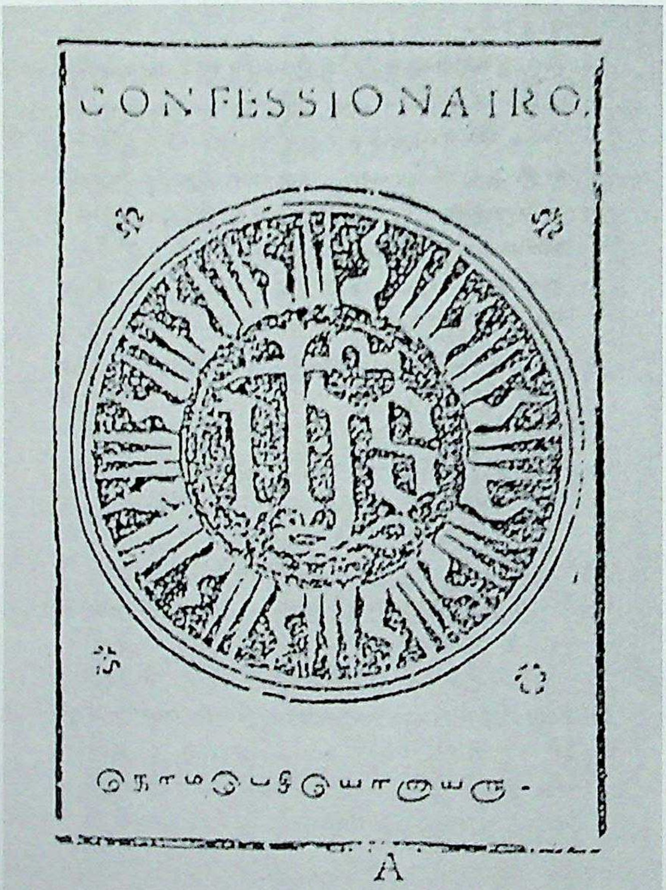



Fig. 3 *Confessionairo*, Kochi, 1580, title-page

The initial part of the Jesuit print programme was completed in 1586 with the printing of the monumental *Flos Sanctorum* ('Anthology of [the Lives of] Saints' and a description of the principal feasts of the liturgical year). Henriques had worked on the composition of this book for many years, his sources being one similar Portuguese work and two Latin works. One exemplar in the Vatican Library, having 334 ff°, was rediscovered in 1954 by Xavier S. Thani Nayakam (see Wicki 1956, and Schurhammer 1967 for the edition). A second, incomplete exemplar was found by G. Shaw (1993) in the Royal Library of Copenhagen. (Both exemplars lack a printed title-leaf: Henriques' *Prologo al lector* and table of contents are provided on manuscript ff° only in the Vatican exemplar, which is now available online; see Vat.Ind.24). There have been suggestions that the printing was done at Punnaikayal (near Thoothukudi), a relatively minor missionary station on the Fishery Coast. However, it is much more likely that the work, made with de Faria's Kollam types that were already in use in Kochi, was produced there (ie., in Kochi) on the press of the College of the Mother of God. According to Shaw, "after initial experiments at Goa and Kollam, Kochi clearly became the principal centre of vernacular printing in the 16th century and undoubtedly *Flos Sanctorum* represents its finest achievement." (Shaw 1993: 45)

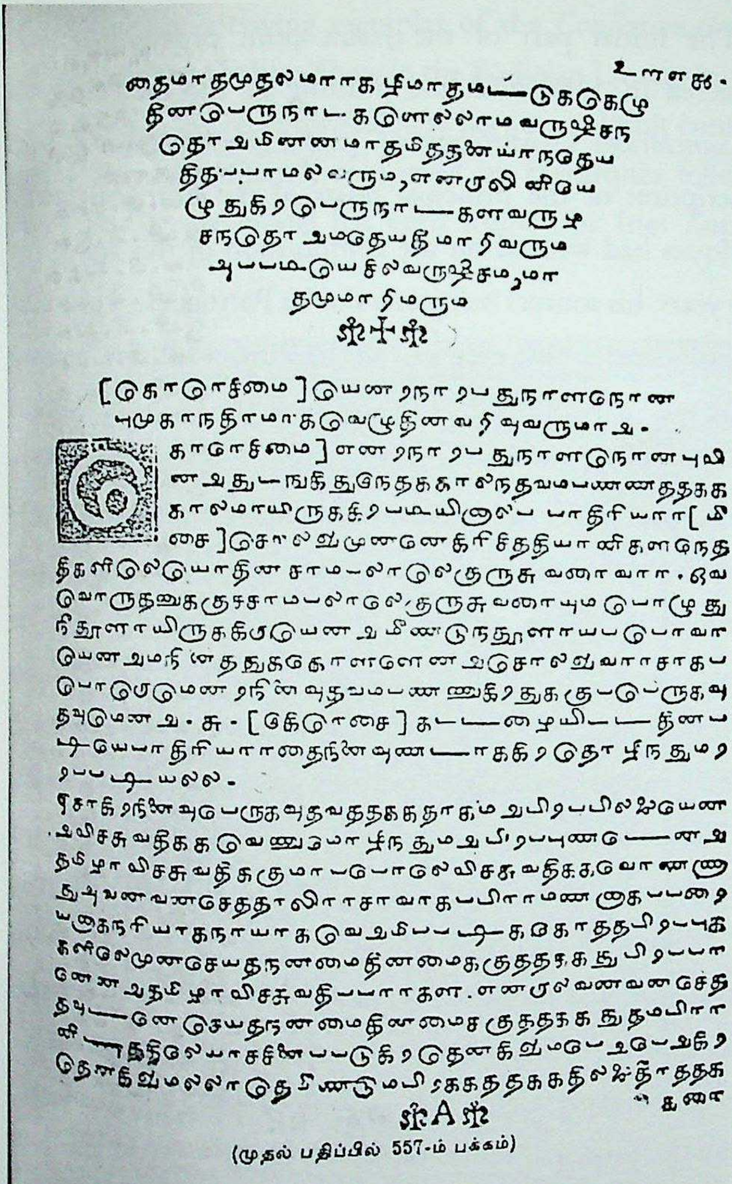

(முதல் பதிப்பில் 557-ம் பக்கம்)

Fig. 4 *Flos Sanctorum*, [Kochi], 1586, f° 279r (end of the account of St. Silvester, beginning about Lent feast)

However, with the exception of these five imprints from the years 1577-1586, which were probably produced with very few exemplars each, no Catholic printing in Tamil was made by the Jesuits till, nearly one century later, the Catechism of Roberto de Nobili was printed in Ambalakkad in 1675-78 (see below). The usage of such costly books seems indeed to have been restricted to the priestly milieu of the Jesuit colleges and seminaries, and the local people remained outside this new printed book culture.

## The beginnings of the Jesuit-patronised theatrical art in 17$^{th}$ c. Malabar

Interestingly, in Henrique Henriques's obituary, published in the *Annual Letter* of the Goa Province for the year 1600, it is noted that:

> [Henriques'] books are not only in the hands of the Christians but also in those of the Hindus in the interior, who are astonished about the good types and language and much more about the novelty of the things and hidden mysteries. From them, the poets take the opportunity to magnify our things in verses and the actors take from them the material for devout representations, which they write in prose and not in verse as we do. The reason is that they cannot say a thing in verse except singing, and as the representations would not be well understood if they were sung, they

> write the tragedies in prose so that everyone may understand it better in that concise form. (transl. Schurhammer 1967: xii)

This early native Christian sung poetry in Tamil, possibly purely oral and not even recorded in manuscripts, has left no trace (see below for the Jesuit works of the same type produced in manuscripts one century later). As for the 'representations', we have here what is probably the earliest testimony (until now neglected) about a popular form of theatrical art in Tamil prose and based on Christian themes, developed in the local Roman Catholic communities of the Latin rite under the Jesuit patronage. (The Jesuits attempted this themselves in other places, and there was even a peculiar 16th-18th c. Jesuit drama genre, but in our case the local origin must be stressed). This simple type of representation in prose can be seen as the origin of what will become the *caviṭṭunāṭakaṃ* theatrical genre. The texts were originally composed in Tamil, and traditionally the origin of these texts is ascribed to a legendary figure coming from the Tamil country. Over and above the prose texts, the genre has additional playback songs, and also music and dance (Mal. *caviṭṭu* means 'rhythmic stepping') aspects. These are not alluded to in 1600, and may have developed under the later influence of other art-forms (like Kathakali) of the Hindu (Naṃpūtiri and Nāyar) elite. A very similar tradition of Latin Christian *nāṭakam* survived until the end of the 20th century in Tamil Nadu, and was prominent in the southern regions

around Tirunelveli. (In this latter case, the influence is said to have been come from the local ritual of the *terukkūttu* folk poetry-cum-prose musical dance-drama.)

To stay with *cavițțunāțakaṃ*, the following are the earliest plays of that art-form: 1) *Kāṟal(s)mān caritraṃ* (The story of Charlemagne), a cycle of five dramas, ascribed to the founder of the genre, Cinnattaṃpi Aṇṇāvi; 2) *Bṛśīna/Brijīna caritraṃ* (The story of St. Brigid [of Ireland]), also ascribed to Cinnattaṃpi Aṇṇāvi (his two works are in Tamil-Malayalam language); and, 3) *Janōva-nātakaṃ* (The drama of St. Genevieve [of Brabant]). For all of these plays, the performance texts as in the manuscripts remain unpublished.

*Kāṟal(s)mān-caritraṃ* is not only the purported oldest, but also by far the most famous specimen of the genre. The *Life of Charlemagne* (Charles the Great), like that of (king) Alexander, was usually found in medieval collections of *Lives of Saints* (for example, in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, that is *Legenda aurea* or *Legenda sanctorum*). Following Spanish stage adaptations of expanded versions from the late medieval period, it became a popular theme in the vernacular theatre patronised by the Jesuits everywhere within both the Portuguese and the Spanish colonial empires (see Tarabout 2017; Wilson & Rajan 2019-20).

Regarding *Bṛśīna/Brijīna caritraṃ*, here is a brief summary of the story by VP Joseph Valiyaveetil (cf. Valiyaveetil 2014: 134-35):

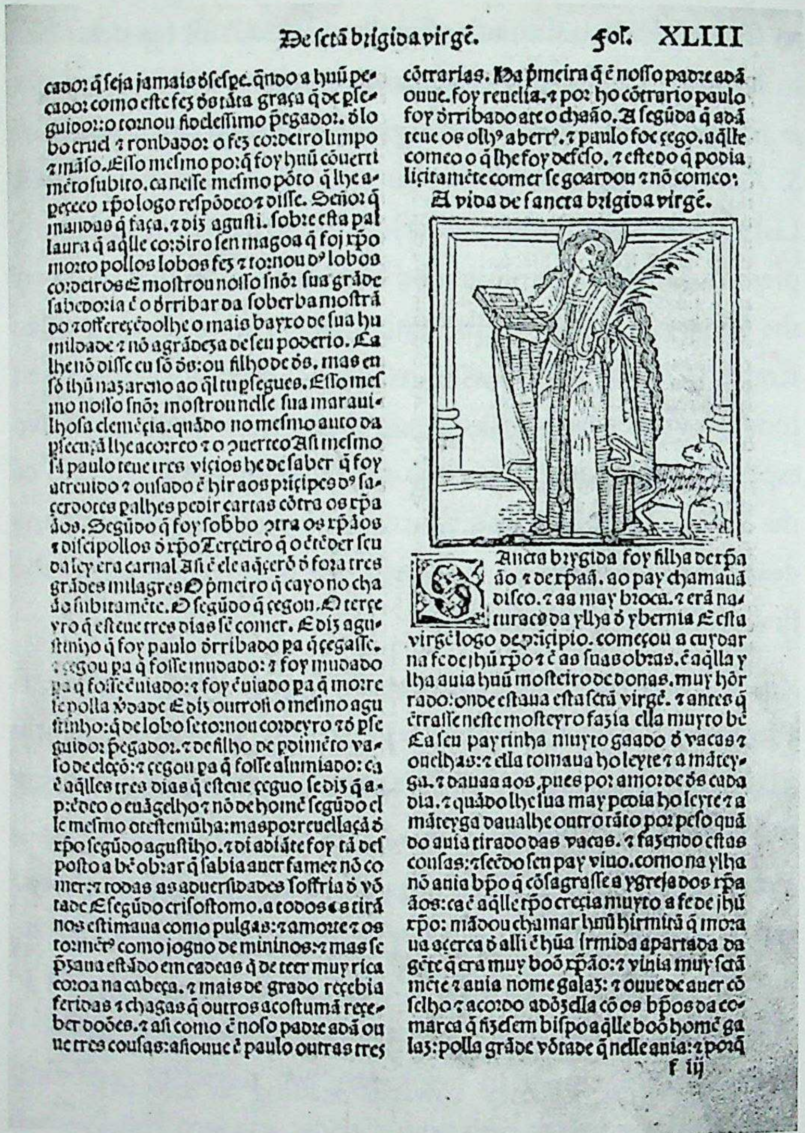
> This was the first drama that made a tremendous change in the subject matter of *caviṭṭunāṭakaṃ* plays. The earliest drama like *Kāṟalmān* only dealt with the heroic combats, valorous deeds and gave prior importance to war in an atmosphere similar to that of European crusades. But *Brijīna* dealt with the story of a beautiful maiden and her struggle to be in the moral way of life against the trickery of Aḷvān, the antagonist. At the end, truth and moral chastity win against all the bad elements. The text with this theme upholds a Christian way of life with its spiritual and moral chastity, and gave birth to the production of such type of texts in this genre.

Why such a choice of the figure of St. Brigid for this vernacular drama? Her story was not told in Henriques's Tamil *Flos Sanctorum* of 1586. However, the story is found in some earlier Portuguese *Flos Sanctorum* (for example, *Ho flos sanctō*[*rum*] *em lingoaje*[*m*] *p*[*or*]*tugue*[*s*], Lisbon, 1513, f° xliii, on 'Brigida Virgem', viz. 'Brigid the Virgin'). Moreover, a part of the saint's skull is preserved in the Igreja São João Batista (Church of St. John the Baptist) on the Lumiar near Lisbon. This church began the invocation of 'Santa Brígida' from the mid-16th century, when a new side chapel was built and dedicated to her, and a commemorative inscription was put on the northern facade of the church stating (in the manner of a legend) that her head that was kept there was once carried to

King Denis of Portugal in 1283 by three Irish knights travelling to the Aragonese Crusade. Finally, in 1587-88 (as described in Manoel de Campos' *Relaçam do solenne recebimento que se fez em Lisboa ás santas reliquias q̃ se leuáram á igreja de S. Roque da Companhia de Iesv aos .25. de Ianeiro de 1588*, Lisbon, 1588), (another part of) St. Brigid's skull was solemnly presented to the church of the Society of Jesus in Lisbon by the Austrian Emperor Rudolph II, that is the Igreja de São Roque (Church of St. Roch), where her head is still venerated today. All this means that the popularity of St. Brigid increased especially much in the Portuguese Jesuit milieu at the end of the 16th century. The Jesuit-patronised *caviṭṭunāṭakaṃ* drama dealing with her figure can therefore be dated tentatively to the first part of the 17th century.

Moving on to the content of *Janōva nātakaṃ*, here is a brief synopsis of the play, taken from Valiyaveetil (slightly adapted and completed, with my notes in brackets, according to Valiyaveetil 2014: 127-28):

> The emperor Charles was the ruler of the kingdom of Gērṣya [= Germania?]. In his old age, he has decided to hand over his power to his nephew Sipriyōs [*marumakkattāyaṃ* custom?], and he starts his journey towards leading a monastic life. The new king Sipriyōs sends his minister Gōlō to ask the hand of Janōva, who is a Marian devotee and the daughter of the king of Pīrmōṭŭ [= Piedmont?], called Prabhandhan [= Brabant?].



De sctã brigida virgẽ. Fol. XLIII

cador q̃ seja jamais despe. q̃ndo a huũ pecador como este fez deos tãta graça q̃ de psseguidor o tornou fiodelissimo p̃egador. de lobo cruel ⁊ roubador o fez cordeiro limpo ⁊ mãso. Esso mesmo porq̃ foy huũ cõuertimẽto subito. ca nesse mesmo põto q̃ lhe apeeceo xpõ logo respõdeo ⁊ disse. Senhor q̃ mandas q̃ faça. ⁊ diz agusti. sobre esta pallaura q̃ aq̃lle cordeiro sen magoa q̃ foi xpõ morto pollos lobos fez ⁊ tornou dos lobos cordeiros E mostrou nosso snõr sua grãde sabedoria ẽ o derribar da soberba mostrãdo ⁊ offerecẽdolhe o mais baixo de sua humildade ⁊ nõ a grãdeza de seu poderio. Ca lhe nõ disse eu sõ deos: ou filho de deos. mas eu sõ ihũ nazareno ao q̃l tu psegues. Esso mesmo nosso snõr mostrou nelle sua marauilhosa clemẽçia. quãdo no mesmo auto da pseeuçã lhe acorreo ⁊ o cõuerteo Assi mesmo sã paulo teue tres viçios he de saber q̃ foy atreuido ⁊ ousado ẽ hir aos prĩçipes dos saçerdotes pa lhes pedir cartas cõtra os xpãaãos. Segũdo q̃ foy sobbo cõtra os xpãos ⁊ discipollos de xpõ Terçeiro q̃ o ẽtẽder seu da ley era carnal Assi ẽ ele aq̃çerõ de fora tres grãdes milagres O p̃meiro q̃ cayo no chaão subitamẽte. O segũdo q̃ çegou. O terçeyro q̃ esteue tres dias sẽ comer. E diz agustinho q̃ foy paulo derribado pa q̃ çegasse. ⁊ çegou pa q̃ fosse mudado: ⁊ foy mudado pa q̃ fosse ẽuiado: ⁊ foy ẽuiado pa q̃ morresse polla vdade E diz outrossi o mesmo agustinho: q̃ de lobo feroz nou cordeyro ⁊ dõ psseguidor p̃egador. ⁊ de filho de perdiçõ vaso de eleiçõ: ⁊ çegou pa q̃ fosse alumiado: ca ẽ aq̃lles tres dias q̃ esteue çeguo se diz q̃ aprẽdeo o euãgelho ⁊ nõ de homẽ segũdo elle mesmo o testemũha: mas por reuellaçã de xpõ segũdo agustinho. ⁊ di adiãte foy tã desposto a bẽ obrar q̃ sabia auer fame ⁊ nõ comer: ⁊ todas as aduersidades soffria de võtade E segũdo crisostomo. a todos es tirãnos estimaua como pulgas: ⁊ a morte ⁊ os tormẽtos como jogno de mininos: ⁊ mas se p̃zaua estãdo em cadeas q̃ de teer muy rica coroa na cabeça. ⁊ mais de grado reçebia feridas ⁊ chagas q̃ outros acostumã reçeber dooẽs. ⁊ assi como ẽ noso padre adã ouue tres cousas: assi ouue ẽ paulo outras tres cõtrarias. Na p̃meira q̃ ẽ nosso padre adã ouue. foy reuelia. ⁊ por ho cõtrario paulo foy derribado ate o chaão. A segũda q̃ adã teue os olhos abertos. ⁊ paulo foe çego. a q̃lle comeo o q̃ lhe foy defeso. ⁊ este do q̃ podia liçitamẽte comer se goardou ⁊ nõ comeo:

A vida de sancta brigida virgẽ.

Sancta brygida foy filha de xpãão ⁊ de xpãã. ao pay chamauã disco. ⁊ aa may broca. ⁊ erã naturaes da ylha de ybernia E esta virgẽ logo de prĩçipio. começou a curdar na fe de jhũ xpõ ⁊ ẽ as suas obras. ẽ aq̃lla ylha auia huũ mosteiro de donas. muy hõrrado: onde estaua esta sctã virgẽ. ⁊ antes q̃ ẽtrasse neste mosteyro fazia ella muyto bẽ Ca seu pay tinha muyto gaado de vacas ⁊ ouelhas: ⁊ ella tomaua ho leyte ⁊ a mãteyga. ⁊ dauaa aos pues por amor de deos cada dia. ⁊ quãdo lhe sua may pedia ho leyte ⁊ a mãteyga daualhe outro tãto por peso quãdo auia tirado das vacas. ⁊ fazendo estas cousas: ⁊ seẽdo seu pay viuo. como na ylha nõ auia bpõ q̃ cõsagrasse a ygreja dos xpãaãos: ca ẽ aq̃lle tpõ creçia muyto a fe de jhũ xpõ: mãdou chamar huũ hirmitã q̃ moraua açerca de alli ẽ hũa hermida apartada da gẽte q̃ era muy boõ xpãão: ⁊ viuia muy sctãmẽte ⁊ auia nome galaz: ⁊ ouue de auer cõselho ⁊ acordo a deos ella cõ os bpos da comarca q̃ fizesem bispo aq̃lle boo homẽ galaz: polla grãde võtade q̃ nelle auia: ⁊ porq̃

f iij

Fig. 5 Brigida Virgem ('Brigid the Virgin') in the Portuguese *Flos Sanctorum* of 1513

The marriage happens. Janōva sincerely loves her husband and leads a happy life. When the joy was surging everywhere (Janōva is then pregnant but Sipriyōs does not know it yet), Jēmaluddhyan [= Jalâluddin Muhammad Akbar?], the Muslim ruler of the kingdom of Almēnya [= Armenia?], enters. He calls his minister to enquire about the well-being of his country, then his minister tells him that Prabhandhan, the king of Pīrmōṭū, is not paying him the yearly tax. Jēmaluddhyan, angry, sends him with a letter to Prabhandhan, but the latter mocks Jēmaluddhyan and sends the minister back. King Jēmaluddhyan, now furious, declares war against the king of Pīrmōṭū. In turn, Sipriyōs (as a firm ally of the father of his wife) goes to war against the king of Almēnya. Jēmaluddhyan is killed in fight by Sipriyōs. In the meanwhile, Gōlō attemps to violate Janōva. Sipriyōs (still abroad and misinformed by Gōlō about the fact that she is pregnant) blames Janōva and sends her off to the forest to be killed. (Fortunately, the executioners leave her alive). Thereafter, Sipriyōs comes to know the truth, and is filled with remorse. A few years later, during a hunting expedition in the same forest, he stumbles upon Janōva and her young son. He condemns Gōlō to be hanged, and he himself retreats to monastic life.

Let's compare this with the frame-story of the original hagiographic novel. In the original, Genevieve, daughter of the Duke of Brabant, was the wife of the Palatine Siffroi. Married for some time, but having no children yet, the palatine had to leave her to join Charles Martel and his army for fighting the Saracens. Genevieve, who was pregnant on the day of her husband's departure without knowing it yet, was entrusted to the king's steward named Golo. The lubricious Golo fails repeatedly to seduce the chaste Genevieve. Later, at the birth of her child, he denounced her and told Siffroi, still abroad, that his wife had just given birth to the fruit of an adultery. By return letter, Siffroi ordered Golo to have the mother and child drowned. The steward delivered the two victims to servants who, having arrived in a nearby forest, were moved and touched by both the mother and her baby. They resolved to leave them alive, abandoning them in that wild place. For several years, Genevieve and her child survived in the forest under the protection of the Virgin Mary, thanks to the milk of a doe that became attached to them. One day, during a hunt, Siffroi reached the cave where Genevieve was living. Seeing the miraculous nature of this encounter, he understood the truth, recognized her innocence, and condemned to death his steward Golo. In gratitude for her protection, Genevieve of Brabant had a chapel built in honour of the Virgin at the place where she was found.

This story combines several folkloric themes common in medieval romances, such as the falsely accused woman, the condemned man who is saved by merciful executioners,

and the motif of the providential animal. Genevieve's story itself appears to be a 14th c. founding legend for a chapel in Frauenkirchen, in the Rhineland-Palatinate region of Germany. The legend, attested as early as the 14th-15th centuries by three late-Latin redactions (based on a lost archetype), remained locally and socially confined until 1634, when a French novel, *L'Innocence reconnue ou Vie de Sainte Geneviève de Brabant*, was published, which turned the Rhenish hagiographic legend into a long, pious and gallant tale. Its author was the Nantes-based Jesuit René de Cériziers (1603-1662), whose work was often reprinted (Mons, 1638, Paris, 1640, 1645, 1646, etc., Tournai, 1640, Lyon, 1649, 1669, Brussels, 1656, 1675, etc.) and translated or adapted into German, Italian, Spanish and English. An Italian opera was based on it as early as 1641 (*La Genoinda*, by Giulio Rospigliosi, the future Pope Clement IX), and René de Cériziers himself adapted it for the stage: *Geneviève de Brabant, ou l'innocence reconnue*, a tragedy in 5 acts (1649). It was from this time onwards that the legend became extremely popular in Europe, and it remained so until the middle of the 20th century, adapted for several operas, films and comics.

It was therefore through the Jesuits that the legend arrived in South India, and not before the second half of the 17th century. The German Jesuit Johann Ernst Hanxleden (1681-1732) was active in the Malabar in the first third of the 18th century where he became known under the name Arnos Padiri (Arṇṇōsŭ Pātiri, from the Portuguese *Ernesto Padre*, 'Father Arnos'). He was the author of a Sanskrit grammar and several

poetic works in Malayalam, and, possibly inspired by a German version of the Genevieve story, he himself composed a *Janō(vē) va parv(v)aṃ* (Epic Song on Genevieve) in about 1500 stanzas in Sanskritised Malayalam. Paulinus a Sancto Bartholomaeo (1748-1806), known in Kerala as Paulinos Padiri, a Discalced Carmelite who followed in Arnos Padiri's footsteps, refers to it as *Jenovēva puṇyacaritaṃ* ('Genoveva punya tscharidam'; '[poema seu Parvam] de S. Genoveva', 'Vita S. Genovefae', 'Cantus de S. Genoveva Germaniae comite', 'Excellens carmen de B. Genoveva, comite Brabantina'). The work (in a form possibly revised and improved by indigenous scholars) has been published in Kerala several times (1892, 1929-1930, 1982, 2002; see Vielle 2021: 27-32). In this version, Siffroi is called Siprasō (Siprārajaṉ), Golo is called Gōlō, Brabant is called Prabēndha, The Great King is referred to as Empradōr, and the Enemy King as Dūrkka/u (= the [great] Turk). It remains difficult to determine whether the popular *Janōva nāṭakaṃ* (the *caviṭṭunāṭakaṃ* play) is later, contemporary or earlier than this refined epic poem.

As a testimony of the legend's popularity in South India, one can mention an unpublished Tamil dramatic version (*Ceṉuvappammāḷ carittira nāṭakam*, Paris Ms. BnF Indien 492), and two more Malayalam dramatic versions composed in the late 19th - early 20th c.: a *Janōva nātakaṃ* by Kōmattu Kuññupaṇikkaṉ, and the musical (in Tamil style; *saṃgīta-nāṭakaṃ*) *Janōva-parvvaṃ* by TC Achyuta Menon. The Tamil-Malayalam film *Genova* (*Janōva*, 1953) by F Nagoor was an adaptation of Achyuta Menon's play.

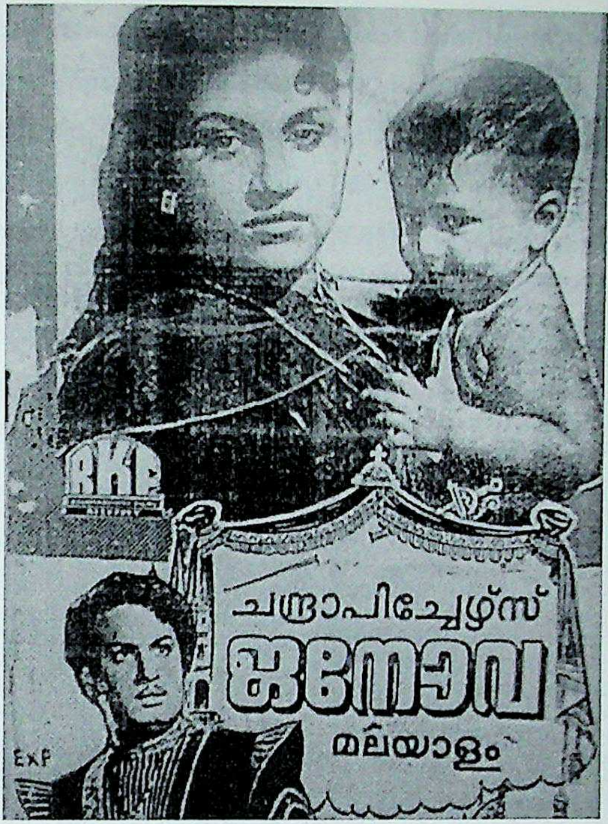



Fig. 6 Poster of the Tamil-Malayalam film *Genova* by F. Nagoor, 1953

## Manuscripts versus printing in 17th-18th c. Malabar

The fact is that the use of printing disappears in the Malabar and Tamil areas from 1586 to about 1675, that is, for nearly one century. The exceptions are a few untraced books of Catholic doctrine and ritual in Syriac language and script (with some notes in Garshuni Malayalam), printed with Chaldean types

brought from Rome (Ferroli 1939: 470). They were produced during a short period, between 1587 and the beginning of the 17th century, under Francisco Roz (1559–1624), in the Jesuit seminary of Vaipikotta, in Chennamangalam, where "the Jesuits started to create a new Tridentine Catholic literature in Syriac and Malayalam, which was destined to replace the local culture, deemed to be 'Nestorian'" (Perczel 2019: 680).

In the meantime, famous Jesuits of the Madurai Mission, like Roberto de Nobili (1577-1656) or his disciple Emmanuel Martins (1597-1656), worked, by *accomodatio,* as *saṃnyāsis* and composed several religious works in the Tamil language. The works of the former are well-known. As for the latter, only one of his treatises, the *Ñāṉamuttumālai* ("Garland of Pearls of Wisdom", with the specific Christian use here of *jñānam* as '[religious] knowledge' for the Latin *spiritus/spiritualis*) has been published, but others are still preserved in manuscripts in the Jesuit Archives of the Madurai Province (JAMP). This doctrinal and spiritual production in native language circulated only in (palm-leaf and paper) manuscript form, like several Tamil grammars and dictionaries by other Jesuits that were written (for internal use) on paper manuscripts in codex form.

Note that during the same period, Jesuit printing in vernacular language (and in Roman script only) continued slowly in Goa, at the press of St. Ignatius College, Rachol (in the south of Goa), where, for instance, works of Thomas Stephens (1549-1619) were printed, most of them posthumously. (His

works are: *Krista purāṇa* in classical Marathi, 1616, 1649, 1654; *Doutrina Christam* in Konkani in 1622; and his grammar of Konkani, *Arte de Lingua Canarin* in 1640).

Ironically, it was after the Jesuits were forced to leave Kochi with the arrival of the Dutch in 1663, when they founded the College and seminary of Ambalakkad (Ambazhakkad, or Sampaloor "St. Paul place") in the safer interior of central Kerala, that a printing press was reinstalled there, using new Tamil types (similar but clearly distinct from the de Faria font; Shaw 1981b). One of the first Carmelite missionaries who came to the Malabar, Matthew of St Joseph (founder of the Verapoly seminary in 1682), testifies that in Tuticorin he was shown 16 or 17 kinds of Tamil religious books that had been published in Ambalakkad (Ferroli 1951: 295; this statement without reference agrees with the 1681 testimony of the Belgian Jesuit Antoine Thomas, edited by Hosten 1938: 515). Two have survived: the *Catechism* (*Ñāna Upadēsam* "The Teaching of [religious] Knowledge") of Roberto de Nobili, Pt. I-III printed in 1675-77 (an exemplar is in the Goa State Central Library), Pt. IV in [1678] (one exemplar, ex-libris Anquetil Duperron, is preserved in Châlons-en-Champagne Library in France); and the Tamil-Portuguese dictionary of Antão de Proença (1625-1666), *Vocabulario Tamulico*, printed in 1679 (one exemplar is in the Vatican Library, see Borg.Ind.12). We also know that the Portuguese-Tamil dictionary of Baltasar da Costa (c. 1610-1673) was also there printed in 1680, possibly together with his Tamil grammar (*Arte Tamulica*), but no copy of these has survived.



VOCABVLARIO
TAMVLICO.
COM A SIGNIFICAÇAM
PORTVGVEZA.
COMPOSTO PELLO P. ANTAM DE PROENÇA.
DA COMPANHIA DE
IESV
MISSIONARIO DA MISSAM DE MADVREY.

IHS

Com todas as licenças necessarias da sancta Inquiziçaõ.
E dos Superiores.

Na imprenssa Tamulica da Prouincia do Malabar, por Ignacio Archamoni impressor della, Ambalacatta em 30. de Iulho 1679. annos.

Fig. 7 Antão de Proença, *Vocabulario Tamulico*, Ambalakkad, 1679, title-page

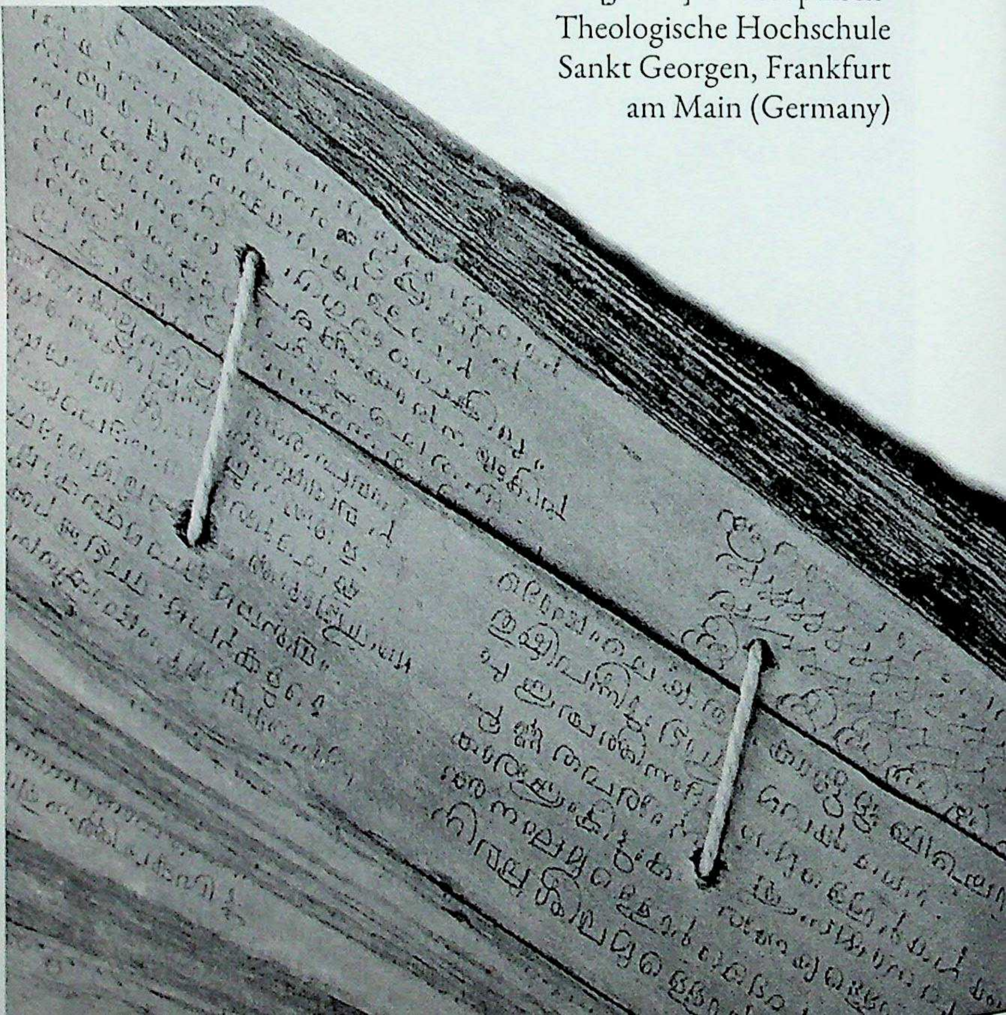
Jesuit printing activity in Malabar, like the whole of Roman Catholic missionary printing in India, was definitively stopped following the promulgation of a decree in 1684 by the Portuguese authorities in Goa banning the use of Konkani, and subsequently of the other vernacular native languages.

In the 18th century, the Malayalam religious poetry of Arnos Padiri had, much like the Tamil religious literary writings of Costanzo Giuseppe Beschi (1680-1747), aimed to provide the local Christians with works as beautifully carved as the ones of the Brahmin elite. In both cases, the poems circulated as palm-leaf manuscripts as well as in oral sung form. They became popular and were eventually integrated into the local liturgy, even in the liturgy of the (Catholic) St. Thomas Christians in the case of Arnos Padiri. His principal works were the *Puttaṉ pāna* (the 'New Hymn'), a devotional epic on the life of Christ, and the *Caturantyaṃ*, a mystic epic on the 'Four Ends' of man (each of which corresponds to a special *parvaṃ*: *Maraṇa* - 'Death', *Vidhi* - '[Universal] Judgement', *Naraka* - 'Perdition', and *Mōkṣa* - 'Paradise').

In the case of the *Puttaṉ pāna*, the texts provided by several manuscripts, without any author-ascription, present significant variation compared to the critically edited text (see Vielle 2020 on the Paris BnF Ms., and 2021: 25-26 for the list of all the Mss. — note that the 'Bonn' Ms. is now in Frankfurt, see below Fig. 8, and that there is with me a recently acquired Ms. in Portugal dated 1862). This absence of ascribed authorship bears testimony of some oral dimension (linked to a liturgical

usage) acquired by the poem within about one century, before the first printing of the work in 1844 and its many subsequent reprints (see below), which were at the origin of a kind of stable 'vulgate' version.

Fig. 8 *Puttaṉ pāna (Miśihācaritaṃ)*, Ms. in the Bibliothek der [Jesuit] Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule Sankt Georgen, Frankfurt am Main (Germany)



Arnos Padiri and Beschi, like a few other Jesuit (and Carmelite) missionaries, were also scholars and they wrote grammars and dictionaries of the native languages. These circulated as paper manuscripts in codex form (see Vielle 2017; Vielle & Van Hal 2013), and were kept in the college library for the use of newly arrived missionaries. No confirmation can be found for the 1935 statement by PJ Thomas quoted by Ferroli (1951: 321 fn.), according to which "from the *Annual Letters* we learn that the first Malayalam Dictionary was printed at Ambalakkad as early as 1746", which implies the reactivation of the old Ambalakkad press and the creation of true Malayalam types. Remember that only Tamil characters were in use in 1675-80. Thomas no longer maintains this (unsupported) statement in his 1961 book.

## Back to Print: from 1772 to the 19th century

Whereas the Protestant missionary printing in Tamil started with Bartholomew Ziegenbald in 1713 in the Danish trading post of Tharangambadi (Tranquebar) on the Coromandel coast, the printing of a new Roman Catholic catechism for the Malabar, by the Discalced Carmelite Clemens a Iesu (alias Peanius, 1731-1782) came only in 1772. This was produced in Rome, at the Propaganda Fide press: the [*Nasrāṇikaḷ okkakkum aṟiyeṇṭunna*] *Saṃskṣepavedārtthaṃ* (*Compendiosa legis explanatio omnibus Christianis scitu necessaria Malabarico idiomate*). This work, intended for the instruction of the

local clergy in the Verapoly seminar, constitutes the very first book printed fully in Malayalam characters. It was followed shortly by the *Alphabetum Grandonico-Malabaricum sive Samscrudonicum* (Rome, Propaganda Fide, 1772) authored by the same person, which itself represents the first (short introduction to) Malayalam grammar (mainly devoted to the script and phonetics) ever printed. (Peanius's more comprehensive Malayalam grammar, *Grammatica Latino-Malabarica*, remained, like his *Dictionarium vulgaris linguae Malabaricae*, in manuscript form according to Paulinus a Sancto Bartholomaeo, even if there exist some early references to its in-8° printing in Rome in 1774 under the title *Grammatica Malabar*). Paulinus himself published in 1791 a book of hundred Malayalam proverbs with Latin translations (*Centum Adagia Malabarica: cum textu originali et versione latina nunc primum in lucem edita*, Rome, Antonius Fulgonius).

Thereafter, the first imprints in Malayalam script made on Indian soil were produced in Bombay, at the Courier Press in 1799 and 1811 respectively. (These were the *Grammar of the Malayalam Language* by Robert Drummond, and the Malayalam translation of the gospels by Mar Dionysius I, the Syrian Bishop of Kottayam.) In Kerala, the first Malayalam printing press was established in 1820-21 only, by the (Anglican) Church Missionary Society in Kottayam. Among the several books it produced, there was Arnos Padiri's *Miśihācaritraṃ* or



നസ്രാണികൾ ഒക്കെക്കും
അറിയെണ്ടുന്നസം
ക്ഷെപവെദാർത്ഥം.

COMPENDIOSA LEGIS EXPLANATIO
OMNIBUS CHRISTIANIS
SCITU NECESSARIA
*Malabarico Idiomate.*

ROMAE AN. A NATIVIT. CHRISTI MDCCLXXII.
*Praesidum Facultate.*

Fig. 9 — *Saṃkṣepavedārtthaṃ*,
Rome, Propaganda Fide, 1772, title-page

*Puttaṉ pāna* (1844; this is the very first printed version of the work) and the Sanskrit *Hitopadeśa* (1847) and *Siddharūpam* with *Śrīrāmodantam* (1850). Following the establishing of a first Catholic printing press in 1846 in Mannanam by Chavara Kuriakose Elias (founder of the Congregation of the Carmelites

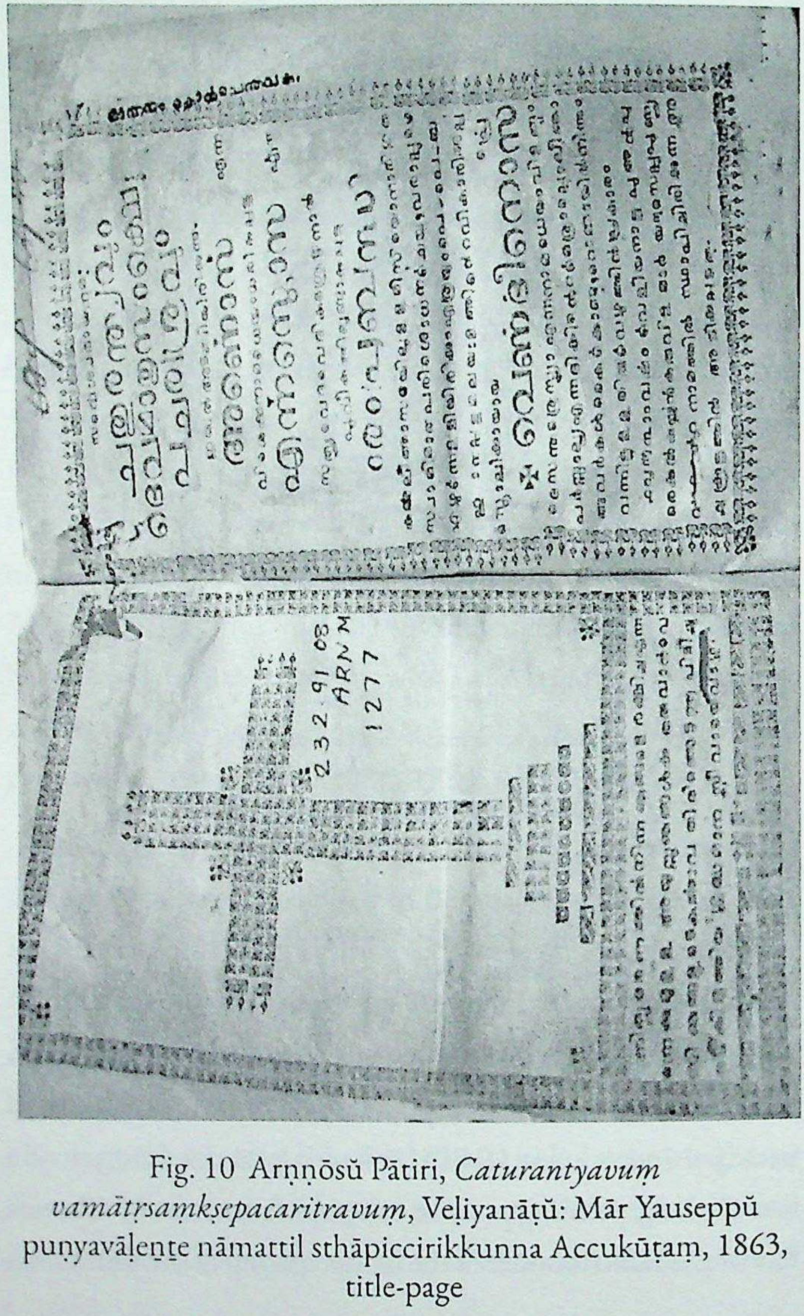


Fig. 10 Arṇṇōsŭ Pātiri, *Caturantyavuṃ vamātṛsaṃkṣepacaritravuṃ*, Veḷiyanāṭŭ: Mār Yauseppŭ puṇyavāḷeṉṟe nāmattil sthāpiccirikkunna Accukūṭaṃ, 1863, title-page

of Mary Immaculate, CMI), a [St.] Ignatius Press (Ignāśū Accukūṭaṃ) was set up by a certain Anthony Pranantis (Antōṇi Praṇāntīs) in Kochi, which produced the second printing of the *Puttaṉ pāna* (*miśihācaritraṃ*) in 1862 (reprinted in 1870 and 1883). The work was also printed at the St. Thomas Press, Kochi in 1888, and at the Metropolitan Press, Verapoly, in 1889 and 1895. The first printing of the work at the (CMI) St. Joseph Press in Mannanam came in 1896 (several reprints were made by them in the 20th c.). Another St. Joseph Press set up in Veliyanad (Ernakulam) printed for the first time Arnos Padiri's *Caturantyaṃ* in 1863. A second printing of this work was made at the Discalced Carmelite press of Koonammavu in 1873, and parts (ie., individual *parvaṃ*s) of the same work were also published in Kochi at the Sarkar Press (1873), Western Star Press (1875, 1878) and Argus Press (1875).

Such an emergence of multiple native presses at that time testifies that the Malayalam-speaking people was then firmly entering into the culture of books. This is nearly three centuries after the very first printing of a vernacular book in Kerala by Henrique Henriques. So, when Jesuit missionaries returned to Kerala from 1879 onwards, they found the works of their famous predecessor (Arnos Padiri) already printed many times over!

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